



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE MARKS MILESTONE IN FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL CHILD SEX TOURISM *Makes Agency's 10th PROTECT Act Arrest Against International Child Sex Predators*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The November 19 indictment of a San Diego man on charges that he traveled to the Philippines to engage in sex with boys marked the tenth child sex tourism arrest brought by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) since the passage of the PROTECT Act in 2003. Only three such cases had been made in the ten years prior to the passage of the act.

Last Friday, a federal grand jury indicted Edilberto Datan, 60, for travel with intent to engage in a sexual act with a juvenile, use of an interstate facility to entice a minor to engage in a criminal sexual act, and production and possession of child pornography. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers in Los Angeles first intercepted Datan on November 4 as he returned from a trip to the Philippines carrying computer memory sticks that contained roughly 100 sexually explicit images of underage Filipino boys. When ICE agents questioned him about the photos, Datan said the boys were members of a dance troupe who came to his hotel room to visit and shower, but denied having any inappropriate contact with them.

The PROTECT Act, signed into law by President Bush on April 30, 2003, removed legal barriers that had limited prosecution of those who travel to foreign countries to engage in the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. The law also enhanced the criminal penalties for child sex tourism and gave federal law enforcement new authorities to investigate these crimes.

"The arrest of Datan, and the nine other people arrested for child sex tourism in the last 18 months, is a clear message that ICE is finding and arresting child sex predators who travel abroad to commit crimes against children," said Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE Michael J. Garcia. "ICE will use all of its resources and authorities to arrest those who believe that committing crimes against children in another country will shield them from the reach of U.S. law enforcement."

Datan's indictment came on the same day as a conviction in another child sex tourism case involving the Philippines. In that case, John W. Seljan, 86, was convicted in federal court in Santa Ana, Calif., on Friday of attempted travel with intent to engage in a sexual act with a juvenile, use of an interstate facility to entice a minor to engage in a criminal sexual act and two counts each of production and possession of child pornography. ICE agents had arrested Seljan in October 2003 as he prepared to board a flight in Los Angeles to engage in sex with two Philippine girls, ages 9 and 12. Seljan is scheduled to be sentenced March 7, 2005. He faces a maximum sentence of 270 years in prison.

Facilitated by ICE's 52 attachés stationed around the world, these ten PROTECT Act cases are part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative launched last year to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case

of foreign nationals, deport child sex predators. Since the initiative began in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 4,400 individuals nationwide. Approximately 85 percent of those arrested were foreign national sexual predators whose crimes make them deportable – more than 2,100 child predators have been removed to date. In addition, foreign law enforcement officials acting on ICE leads have arrested more than 860 sexual predators in their respective countries.

Other child sex tourism investigations worked by ICE include:

Michael Lewis Clark, 70 / Cambodia: On June 25, 2004, Clark was sentenced to 97 months in jail. This case represented the first child sex tourism case in the nation brought under the PROTECT ACT. Clark was arrested in Cambodia by Cambodian authorities in June 2003 for engaging in illegal sexual activity with two boys aged 10 and 13. The subsequent investigation by ICE and Cambodian authorities determined Clark may have molested as many as 50 children in Cambodia in recent years.

Gary Evans Jackson, 56 / Cambodia: On June 23, 2004, Jackson pleaded guilty to child sex tourism. Jackson was arrested Sept. 1, 2003, on charges of engaging in illegal sexual conduct with three males between the ages of 10 and 15 years old in Cambodia. Cambodian authorities removed Jackson to the United States.

Richard Arthur Schmidt, 61 / Cambodia: Schmidt pleaded guilty on July 8, 2004, in a 10-count federal indictment in Baltimore with multiple violations of the PROTECT Act involving the molestation of minor boys in the Philippines and Cambodia. He arrived at Dulles International Airport in February 2004 accompanied by ICE agents on a flight from Asia. Schmidt had previously been convicted of child sex crimes in Maryland three times.

Gregory Kapordelis, 43 / Russia: In April 2004, ICE agents arrested Kapordelis at JFK Airport in New York upon his arrival from Russia. Kapordelis, the chief of anesthesiology at a medical facility in Georgia and a physician at summer camps in the area, was arrested on a criminal complaint alleging that he traveled to St. Petersburg, Russia, several times to engage in sex with several juveniles. In some cases, Kapordelis is alleged to have drugged the children prior to sodomizing them.

Timothy Ronald Obert, 36 / Costa Rica: On June 23, 2004, ICE agents arrested Obert at his residence in Santa Cruz, Calif. Obert is alleged to have engaged in sexual relations with a minor in Costa Rica while serving there as a Peace Corps volunteer and to have provided the minor with money, drugs and alcohol in connection with the sex acts.

Sebastian Sarraute, 30 / United States and Mexico: On Sept. 24, 2004, ICE agents arrested Sarraute at the Tucson, Ariz., airport as he arrived in the United States from France. The arrest was the culmination of a yearlong investigation by ICE. Agents say Sarraute, a French national, believed he was coming to Tucson to finalize plans to travel to Mexico to have sex with girls who ranged in age from 10 to 14.

Manfred Knittel, 53/ United States and Mexico: On Oct. 31, 2004, ICE agents arrested Knittel at the Tucson, Ariz., airport as he arrived in the United States from Germany. Agents say Knittel, a German national, believed he was coming to Tucson to finalize plans to travel to Mexico to have sex with girls who ranged in age from 6-11 years.

Walter Schirra, 54 / Thailand: On Nov. 6, 2004, ICE agents arrested Walter Schirra at a San Francisco airport as he was about to board an Eva Airways flight to Thailand where he allegedly intended to solicit sex with underage boys. A search of his luggage revealed photos of shirtless 12-14 year old Asian boys large amounts of candy, as well as prescription drugs and other aids designed to enhance sexual pleasure. ICE agents also executed a search warrant at Schirra's residence, where they initially found approximately 15-20 images of child pornography on his computer and seized computers and computer media for further analysis.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.